

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, on June 13 of this year, a bill was introduced that would give President Bush fast track authority essentially to extend the North American Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA, to all of Latin America.

Supporters of fast track argue that the U.S. is being left behind. They tell us we need fast track to increase American exports and to create new jobs for American workers. Yet, our history of flawed trade agreements has led to a trade deficit with the rest of the world that has surged to \$369 billion a year.

The Department of Labor recently reported a very conservative estimate that NAFTA alone has been responsible for the loss of more than 300,000 jobs. Other estimates have shown NAFTA job losses at upwards of 1 million jobs.

While our trade agreements go to great lengths to protect investors and to protect property rights, these agreements do not typically include enforceable provisions to protect workers, either in the United States or around the world. Yet, the Bush administration would employ the same corporatecentric process that has resulted in tried agreements like NAFTA.

In the global marketplace, labor and environmental concerns in the developing world are never on the list of corporate priorities. CEOs of multinational corporations tell us that allowing globalization will stimulate development and allow nations to improve their labor and environmental records. They say interaction with the developing world will spread democracy.

But as we engage with developing countries in trade and investment, democratic countries of the developing world are losing ground to those with more authoritarian regimes. Democratic nations such as India are losing out to more totalitarian governments such as China. Democratic nations such as Taiwan lose out to authoritarian regimes such as Indonesia, where profits come before any kind of environmental regulations or human rights.

In manufacturing goods, for example, developing democracies' share of developing country exports fell 22 percentage points, from 57 percent to 35 percent. Corporations relocate their manufacturing bases to countries with more authoritarian regimes where even the most minimal labor, environment, and human rights standards do not exist.

Western corporations want to invest in countries that have poor environmental standards, have below-poverty wages, have no labor rights, and no opportunities to bargain collectively. As American investment moves abroad, American working families lose out.

Now President Bush says he will be asking for fast track authority that

puts corporate interests before working American families. Future trade deals with a take-it-or-leave-it approach would only add to the long line of ill-conceived trade policies.

Flawed trade policies cost American jobs, put downward pressure on U.S. wages and U.S. working conditions, and erode the ability of governments to protect public health and protect the environment.

In 1998, under the leadership of progressive Members of this body, fast track was defeated in Congress overwhelmingly, 243 to 180. Fast track should be defeated in Congress again this year. More and more Members of Congress are joining the ranks calling for trade agreements that respond to the social ramifications of a global economy.

We need to press for a U.S. trade policy, Mr. Speaker, that is good for American families.

#### BIRTHDAY OF A CUBAN HERO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, today is the 40th birthday of a brave human rights activist and pro-democracy leader, Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet, who at this moment finds himself serving a prison sentence in a Cuban gulag for peacefully protesting for democracy in Cuba, after being taken before a farce of a trial in Havana on February 25 of last year.

Dr. Biscet was born in Havana on July 20, 1961. In 1985, he obtained a degree in medicine, and late in that decade he began to openly oppose the totalitarian regime that oppresses the Cuban people.

In 1997, Dr. Biscet was one of the founders of the Lawton Foundation for Human Rights, a humanitarian organization created to demand fundamental human rights from the Cuban totalitarian regime.

In February of 1998, Dr. Biscet was officially expelled from the Cuban health system and he was prohibited from practicing medicine. That same year, he and his family were thrown out of their home, and his wife was fired from her employment due to her pro-human rights activities. Both of them, in fact, were forced to depend on the charity of their friends and of those who wished to see Cuba free.

On October 28, 1999, Dr. Biscet held a press conference before the Ibero-American Summit began in Havana. During the press conference, along with other pro-democracy activists, Dr. Biscet announced that they would carry out a march calling for the release of all political prisoners and for the respect of the human rights of the Cuban people.

During the press conference, two Cuban flags were exhibited upside down

as a symbol of protest for the innumerable human rights violations that the regime commits continuously.

On November 3 of 1999, just a few days later, Dr. Biscet was arrested and taken to a dungeon known as "Cien y Aldabo", where he was thrown into a cell with common criminals for the alleged crimes of "abuse of national symbols, public disorder, and inciting delinquency."

Dr. Biscet represents the noblest aspirations of the Cuban people. His efforts as founder and leader of the Lawton Foundation for Human Rights have won him the respect and admiration of human rights activists throughout the world, and have inspired many to continue the struggle for freedom in Cuba.

The Castro tyranny, fearful of the effectiveness of Dr. Biscet's message, has arrested him more than two dozen times in the last few years. It has fired him from his job, along with his family, thrown him out of his house, he has been subjected to psychiatric examinations, and has been constantly pressured by the regime to leave the island, something that he refuses to do.

Before being sentenced at his farcical trial, Dr. Biscet asked all Cubans, those living in the oppression on the island and those in exile, and all others throughout the world who support freedom for Cuba, to unite in prayer for the freedom of all political prisoners and of all the Cuban people. From his cell, he has remained firm in his principles and has asked the international community to demand justice for the people of Cuba.

It is most appropriate that as we send our message of solidarity to Dr. Biscet today on his birthday, we commit ourselves to working with all devotion and dedication so that freedom-loving individuals like Dr. Biscet do not have to spend their precious lives in the isolation and inhuman conditions of totalitarian dungeons.

There is a program that has been set up to try to help Cuban political prisoners by having families in the United States adopt, if you will, the family of a Cuban political prisoner for at least a year.

A well-known pro-democracy activist, Vicki Ruiz-Labrit, is coordinating the program. They have a phone number. We all should help. It is 305-461-6700. We should all help by adopting the family of a Cuban political prisoner, and in that way, helping the most suffering, those who suffer the most in the totalitarian island just a few miles from our shores.

Dr. Biscet, on your birthday, inside your prison cell I know that you cannot now hear my words, but I salute you and express my profound admiration for you, and through you, for all Cuban political prisoners.